

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

DOTE-00 NIC-01 DRC-01 CU-04 /150 W

----- 017227

R 042146Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9716

INFO AMCONSUL CALI UNN

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN UNN

USCINCSO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CO

SUBJ: PRES PASTRANA CITES BUS STRIKE HANDLING AS PROOF OF GOVERN-
MENT'S CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN ORDER

REF: BOGOTA 8193

1. PRES PASTRANA, IN AN OCT 3 TV REPORT TO THE NATION, ATTRIBUTED THE RECENT BOGOTA BUS STRIKE TO THE ACTIVITIES OF SUBVERSIVE GROUPS AND TO "ORGANIZED ANARCHY". HE THANKED ALL SECTORS OF COLOMBIAN SOCIETY FOR SHOWING SOLIDARITY WITH THE GOVT, NOTING THAT FACTORY WORKERS, GOVT OFFICIALS AND STUDENTS WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS DESPITE THE ATTEMPTS TO "HURL COLOMBIA INTO UNCERTAINTY AND CHAOS". HE EXPRESSED SPECIAL GRATITUDE TO THE ARMED FORCES.

2. IN AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO CHILE, PRES PASTRANA CASTIGATED THOSE WHO "THOUGHT THEY COULD CARRY OUT STRANGE EXPERIMENTS -- AND LEAD OUR LAND ALONG THE SAME DANGEROUS PATHS OF EXPERIMENTS
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WHICH HAVE FAILED IN OTHER PLACES...".

3. IN THE SAME ADDRESS, PASTRANA ALSO STATED THAT THE CRIMINAL GROUPS (GUERRILLAS) WHICH HAD BEEN OPERATING IN ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN ALMOST COMPLETELY LIQUIDATED, WITH THE DEATH OR CAPTURE OF OVER 40 SUCH PERSONS IN THE LAST 2 WEEKS.

4. PASTRANA REFERRED TO HIS GOVT AS ONE OF DIALOGUE, BUT ONE THAT WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE UNDER THREATS OF FORCE WITH SECTORS OUTSIDE OF THE LAW. RETURNING TO A FREQUENT PASTRANA/CONSERVATIVE PARTY THEME, PRES SAID THAT HE WOULD "SPARE NO EFFORT TO HAND OVER A NATION AT PEACE, IN CONCORD, IN PROGRESS AND JUSTICE."

5. COMMENT: PRES PASTRANA'S ATTRIBUTION OF THE BUS STRIKE TO THE ACTIVITIES OF SUBVERSIVE GROUPS APPEARS TO BE AN OVERSTATEMENT, POSSIBLY ENGENDERED BY THE ELECTION YEAR DESIRE OF THE PRES AND HIS PARTY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR ABILITY TO LEAD COLOMBIA'S ORDERLY TRANSITION FROM NATIONAL FRONT GOVT TO FULLY OPEN ELECTIONS IN APRIL.

6. WHILE THE LEADERSHIP OF SOME TRANSPORT WORKERS UNIONS IS RATHER FAR TO LEFT OF COLOMBIAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM, UNIONS' STRIKE COORDINATING COMMITTEE CUT ACROSS POLITICAL LINES. FURTHERMORE, THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT STRIKE WAS MOTIVATED BY POLITICAL OR SUBVERSIVE PURSUITS, BUT RATHER BY TRADITIONAL TRADE UNION INTERESTS, I.E. HIGHER WAGES AND IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS, AND BY FAILURE OF GOC AND EMPLOYERS TO INCLUDE WORKER REPS IN THE AGREEMENT REACHED THE WEEKEND SEPT 29-30 WHICH PROVIDED FOR AN INCREASED SUBSIDY TO BUS OWNERS BUT NOTHING FOR DRIVERS. FINALLY, WHILE VIOLENCE WHICH OCCURRED WAS SPARKED BY THE STRIKE, THE PERPETRATORS WERE UNIV STUDENTS WHO APPEAR ALWAYS READY CREATE HAVOC AND RESIDENTS, PARTICULARLY YOUTHS, OF POORER SECTIONS OF BOGOTA, WHO WERE MOST AFFECTED BY LACK OF TRANSPORTATION, RATHER THAN BY UNION MEMBERS.

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